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Proverbs, chap. 20, ver. 12." "The hearing Ear, and the seeing Eye, the Lord hath made even both of them."

Of the five Senses with which man is blest, Hearing and Seeing are the two principal. My last discourse was on that of Hearing, and from the same text, I mean now to expatiate on the gift of Sight. God having thought proper, as I told you, to create man, endued him with certain Senses to enable him to prolong, and provide for, his existence, and to make himself happy. Among these senses, one is the gift of Sight. "He hath made," saith Solomon, "the seeing Eye."

The capacities adapted to each of our senses are surprisingly curious, beneficial, and gratifying. They are so many links in the chain of human felicity; if one is broken or deficient, the whole mechanism of man is out of order, and every surrounding object of comfort loses its value. Nothing bears its intrinsic worth; all things partake of the imperfection. The afflicted, in the language of the Psalmist cries aloud, "Bow down thine Ear, O Lord,---O hear me---be merciful unto me, for I cry unto Thee daily." He finds no comfort in the pleasures of the world; every enjoyment, whilst he feels his wretchedness, meets his thoughts with disgust. The human frame once disordered, none can rectify but the Great Mechanist of all things, the author of its being. None but God, can restore



the injured faculties to their pristine state. "We are his people, and the work of his hands;" and as a proof of the wisdom of God in such restoration, we see, that in operations on the eye, to restore loss of sight; wounds, there, heal without a scar or seam; which is not the case in general, in other parts of the body. Nature so heals the wound, that vision may not be injured.

The formation of the Eye, as far as can be understood without entering into Optics or the science of vision, may be worth our consideration; it will give us an idea of the wisdom of the Creator, and must convince the Atheist of his absurdity and folly.

How admirably perfect and secure hath the God of nature placed this precious object! He has placed it in the head, the upper part of man, that he may command a greater extent of view, and in the face, that he may see his way before him; hath made the head to turn, that he may look about him; hath given him a pair of eyes as he hath done a pair of ears, not only for uniformity, but that, of so valuable a sense, should he lose the use of one, the other may supply its want; and has so accustomed it, that, like the ears, they are both directed to the same object, and that object appears but one. "He cloathed the eye with a garment" and surrounded it with a host of guards." An arch of firmness protects it from external assaults; a covering keeps out offending particles of dust; the sensible lash defends it from objects floating in the air, and on the least touch causes the lids to close; the socket which contains the eye is far within this fortified place; tears are continually washing it, lest any thing should obstruct its vision, and these are imperceptibly carried off. The pupil dilates or contracts, in proportion to the light, lest any broad glare should injure the optic nerve; the brow projects to keep its sweat from troubling the eye, and can be lowered, so as to shade it. Its



internal mechanism is such, that was I to describe it, it would wonderfully amaze you. Every object within our view, be its size of the greatest magnitude, is accurately painted within, in its proper colours. Though we see objects several miles distant from each other at one and the same moment, God has made us able to measure that distance instantly. In short, to study Anatomy, is to study Divinity, and nothing but downright obstinacy can make a man, who looks into himself, an Atheist, or leave him a doubt of the wisdom and superintendence of Providence.

Most authors who have made the works of God on the creation, the subject of their enquiries, have been lavish in their encomiums on the blessings that result from Sight. By the aid of this sense, he has increased the bands of mutual love and rivetted the fetters of society, as pleasureable chains, that may not be broken. It is the master-key to all the other senses. Without sight, the tie of friendship and the cord of love would be weak and of little strength. How much does the first appearance of a handsome personage prepossess us in his favour? We have often heard of love at first sight. Without the faculty of Seeing, beauty would be but a name; its adjudged symmetry would want its form. The face of innocence, the timid aspect, the modest look, the languishing eye, the blushing cheek, the ruby lips, and teeth of ivory; the graceful shape, the comely stature, and elegance of form, would have no attractions; but the scale being known, most eyes are judges.

If the blessings of Sight were no more than a privilege to man, to behold the glorious orbs of heaven, the luminary of light and heat, the nightly traversers of the sky, the "rulers of the day and night;" I mean the sun, the moon, and stars; if he was destined only to view the foliage of variegated nature, the coats of the earth and



the myriads of animals that inhabit the Land, the Waters and the Air, what could be set up in competition with these? Is not the scope of the eye and the transient survey of nature sufficient food for the understanding? Will it not prepare man for all the vicissitudes of time, and all the changes of the season?

If more disagreeable objects in nature sometimes call his attention; if he is struck by flashes of vivid Lightning, by a blazing Comet, a Burning Volcano, or a fiery Meteor; should these excite his fear; they, at the same time induce him to turn his thoughts on his Creator, and contemplate him with reverence and awe. Nay, should he unfortunately be a spectator of a scene of misery or any of the devastations of Nature, such as Massacre, Famine, Pestilence, Earthquake, Conflagration, or Inundation, it may occasion Terror; but a good man will see these afflictions of Providence in a proper light, and in deploring their necessity, will learn wisdom, fortitude and reformation.

By sight and knowledge from that sight, the tiller of the ground is able to determine his harvest and provide for his sustenance. He prepares the soil, sees that all the seeds are adapted to their beds, watches them in their growth and the yellow appearance pronounces the period of reaping. Here the eye is sole arbiter; no sense but this, can judge of the fitness of the season and the means of gathering the produce.

The Tribes of Animals, though various and numerous, are not without their distinct names and characters. The vegetable system and the several species of minerals have all their respective classes and uses assigned them, by means of Sight. All knowledge of numbering and the written works of genius and art, partake of this gift; for without it, who would have been instructed in any



branch of skill or taste? If we meet with a well informed, blind man, we look on him as a prodigy.

The great orbs and worlds that wander in the heavens could only by man's sagacity of Sight be known to fulfil their course at stated times, and in particular places; and the celestial appearances be rendered familiar to the sight of man.

Notice the curious artist, and see with what accuracy and exactness, by the eye's assistance, he copies the volume of nature in all her varied walks. The mechanic, though less exact in the model, yet not less in taste and genius, exercises his imitative and inventive powers, and gives to every fabric, a wonderful excellence in masterly strokes of finished toil; "See the God in all his ways and works!" What can exhaust the powers of this active agent of his master? Thus blessed with Sight, and directed by reason, he is ever in the habit of invention.

Again, if we descend to a further enquiry; what a field has modern ingenuity produced! The animal creation, so small as scarce to be seen by common vision, by the microscopic glass, is sufficiently magnified, as to behold their parts, equally complete as in the elephant's unweildy size. We see a new world of creatures in the air, and a glass of spring water is full of them.

Had it pleased our Creator to form men without Eyes, how would he be capable of enjoying the great and glorious works of the Almighty that surround him? All would be darkness;---all would be hidden;---all would be useless. He would partake of very few of those blessings which God, with a bountiful hand, bestows upon his creatures. He might grope and feel for subsistence on the spot where he was placed, but this would be all. In perpetual darkness, he would labour under perpetual inconveniencies,



he would be continually exposed to danger and distress; whereas having the gift of Sight, he can provide himself not only with the necessities of life, but with its comforts, and its luxuries. He can ransack the whole world, penetrate into the bowels of the earth, and search the bottom of the sea, in pursuit of wealth and knowledge. He can look about him, see his danger, and avoid those precipices, down which he otherwise would fall. Without Sight, man would be unable to reduce any of the orders of nature to useful forms or plans. In vain would vernal spring put on her livery of green; in vain would the blushing rose, the gaudy tulip, and painted carnation, unfold their beauties. They would bloom unseen, and all the enchantment of the delicious prospect will be lost.

Painting, that boast of science, which by description to the eye calls to our remembrance, events buried in the lapse of time, and those interesting scenes our progenitors have taken part in, and which for so many ages have been dwelt upon with pleasure; this would be unknown, and the gratification of those passions which by the aid of the pencil, have now formed scenes to work on, would pass away unexercised. Scenes of distress to a feeling mind are certainly gratifications; for though they, for a moment, may harrow up the soul, when the passion has been exercised, and the pain dies away, a pleasure succeeds. Without a knowledge of pain, we could not be sensible of its reverse. This cannot be doubted, when we see how eagerly the eye will examine a painted scene of distress, and how eagerly we run to view a fictitious one in the theatre.

Such and so great and numerous are the charms of Sight, and such and so dreary would be the want of it! What then are we to learn from the possession of this blessing? --- To adore our Creator and make a proper use of the gift.



We are to profit then by what we see, "The stars declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy works." God is manifest in all the wonders of creation, and worthy of our adoration. We are not only to see with the eyes of the body, but with the eyes of the mind. We should not see a distressed object without relieving it to the utmost of our power; nor view a cruel one, without succouring the helpless. We should not behold a fine day nor a delightful prospect, without a sense of awful gratitude to Him who has bestowed it; nor see any devastation of nature, without a conviction of our deserts, and a deprecation of the Almighty's vengeance.

To see with the heart, is not an improper figure in this place. Men, by the eye of pity, commiserate the afflictions of the poor, wipe away the tears of the fatherless and the widow, succour the helpless and compassionate the sinner.

Here the Eye speaks in utterable language to the heart. The soul melts with compassion. The tears start involuntarily. Anguish seizes on the thinking faculties, and Charity, that great and godlike principle, follows, which in the language of Christ, is thus defined; "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; by this shall all men know, that ye are my disciples."

Thus are the eyes of men made as useful for spiritual exercises as for temporal ones. The mammon of unrighteousness may be made a friend, and the feeling heart, who hath the good things of this life, will pity those who want them, make the miserable happy, and the widow's heart to sing for joy.

What a wide and exalted field does this glorious attribute of Sight afford us? Does it not assure us of the Omniscience of God, when we remember the Psalmist's words, "He that made the Eye, shall He not see?" For his Omnipotence take the words of



the text, "The hearing Ear, and the seeing Eye, the Lord hath made even both of them." And for his Omnipotence, we read in Exodus, that Moses fearing to go to the land of Egypt, to release his brethren, the children of Israel, God said to him, "Who hath made man's mouth; or who maketh the dumb or deaf, or the seeing or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now go, I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." Let us then keep continually in our view, not only the Omniscience and Omnipresence of the Deity, but also his Omnipotence. Let us remember, that he has not only the knowledge of all our actions, but the power to reward or punish them; as he gave the Eye, he can take it away. Let me persuade you then not to prostitute this blessing to impure or improper purposes, but to make a right use of it. Enjoy the light of the world with singleness of heart, and the light of the spirit; with hearts filled with illuminating knowledge. Let Truth be your light, to guide you in the right path, and carefully shun deceit and falsehood; that ye may not be misled and go astray.

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